

I have referred your questions concerning the Federal Advisory Committee Act to Bernard Nussbaum, the White House Counsel. Mr. Nussbaum has prepared a letter addressing your concerns, which he will deliver to you under separate cover. I have also asked Mr. Nussbaum and his staff to be available to answer any further questions you may have on legal issues relating to the health care task force.

With best wishes,
Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

NOTE: The President's letter was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 8 but was not issued as a White House press release. The White House Counsel's letter was attached to the President's letter.

Remarks Announcing a New Environmental Policy

February 8, 1993

Good morning. I want to make a statement this morning and then turn the microphone over to the Vice President to discuss the environmental issues. And then he will take questions on the matter.

Today I am announcing the creation of a White House Office on Environmental Policy, keeping a commitment that both the Vice President and I made to the American people to bring new leadership and new energy to these issues. And I am today reinforcing my intention to work with the Congress for legislation that will make the Environmental Protection Agency a part of my Cabinet.

We face urgent environmental and economic challenges that demand a new way of thinking and a new way of organizing our efforts here in the White House and in the National Government. This office represents in action our commitment to confront these challenges in a new, more effective way, recognizing the connection between environmental protection and economic growth and our responsibility to provide real leadership on global environmental issues.

We must move in a new direction to recognize that protecting the environment means strengthening the economy and creating new jobs for Americans. And we must be ready

to take advantage of the absolutely enormous business opportunities that exist both here and around the world for new environmental technologies that protect the environment and increase business profits and jobs.

The days of photo-op environmentalism are over. The Competitiveness Council is closed and so is the back door the polluters used to be able to use to get out from under our laws. This office represents our commitment to the environment and to a new, more efficient and effective way to craft policies that work, policies that recognize that protecting the environment, strengthening the economy, promoting the global environment, and dealing with global environmental problems have all too often been relegated to the bottom of the agenda. These are policies that will renew for the American people a genuine commitment to their health, their safety, and their jobs.

This office will be responsible for coordinating environmental policy. The director of the office will participate in the National Security Council, the National Economic Council, and the Domestic Policy Council and will work with all the relevant agencies. I am pleased to announce today that Kathleen McGinty will lead this office and its efforts.

We are today changing the way Government works, replacing the Council on Environmental Quality with a new office that will have broader influence and a more effective and focused mandate to coordinate environmental policy. The American people look to us to make Government work better and more efficiently and more effectively for them. We are taking an important step in that direction today. The American people, our economy, and our environment will benefit as a result of this.

And I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Vice President Gore for the work that he has done since the election. We have been working hard now for more than 2 months to determine exactly how we ought to reorganize our environmental efforts and how we could integrate the environment, for the first time really, into national security policy, national economic policy, and other domestic

policies. I think we've taken a long step in that direction. I thank the Vice President for his leadership, and I turn the microphone over to him.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With President Turgut Özal of Turkey

February 8, 1993

Tax Payment for Domestic Help

Q. Mr. President, are you now going to ask all of your Cabinet Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries whether they have paid Social Security taxes and whether they ever had hired any illegal domestic help?

The President. I've handled that through the White House Legal Counsel. I think Mr. Stephanopoulos has already given a statement.

Q. Do you feel confident that everyone will now pay back taxes?

The President. I do. I think everybody will do what they're supposed to do.

Q. Sir, when are you going to——

Bosnia

Q. Sir, when do you expect to have a statement on Bosnia?

The President. We're very close. I don't want to give you a specific time, but we're very close. As you know, we've done an awful lot of work on it. I spent a lot of time on it last week and a considerable amount of time today. So we're quite close.

Q. Do you think this week you might have a diplomatic initiative?

The President. I think we might be prepared to make a statement in the next few days, yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:04 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Economic Advisers

February 8, 1993

Economic Stimulus Package

Q. Mr. President, do you have any response to the Republican letter? Did they say that they will not support your economic plan unless you do more on the spending side?

The President. They said they were against the stimulus program, and that's basically a statement that they think things are fine in the economy now, and I just disagree with that.

I'd like to read this statement, and then I'll be glad to answer it. That reflects the old way of thinking, you know, we're coming out of a recession; therefore we don't need a stimulus package. It overlooks the fact that there are now 3 million jobs less in this economy than there would be if we were in a normal recovery, that we now have fewer non-farm payroll jobs today than we did 2 years ago—3 years ago, 646,000 fewer jobs than in January of 1990.

Let me make this announcement about unemployment, and then I'll answer a couple of more questions on this.

Unemployment

You all know that we've been here working every day for hours and hours, putting together this economic package designed to increase income and generate jobs and reduce the deficit.

Before we begin our next meeting, I have two things that I want to say: First, despite these encouraging statistics about the increased productivity, there are still millions of Americans who want to go to work to support their families, but they can't find jobs. The unemployment rate, indeed, is 7.1 percent. It's been above 7 percent for 14 months, and is now higher than it was at the so-called bottom of this recession.

Secondly, no short-term solution to the problems of the unemployed is adequate. Many unemployed workers are what we call "permanently displaced." And they need much better access to reemployment services that will provide them the information and